UMAN antipathy for snakes is an instinct that comes as a heritage from ancestors who lived in caves and had to be careful where they set their bare feet. The shiver that chases up and down the normal spinal column at the mere thought of a reptile is a telepathic communication that bas bridged all the time that has elapsed since the period when man was as hairy as and had longer teeth than John Daniel, Ringling Brothers'

This fact makes a sympathy for snakes, especially venomous ones, far more difficult to comprehend than an ordinary divergence from the opinion of the majority. Yet there are folks in New York who are possessed of a positive affection for reptiles-people who are as strangely attracted by snakes as was the queer heroine of Oliver Wendell Holmes's book, Elsie Venner.

Fond of Snakes

snakes were mutually responsive. veins of its enemies and victims. Arthur L. Gillam, of Flushing, L. I., of caged, unwinking serpents. chief huntsman of the Reptile Study Society of America.

business or buzzing its parchment- the places all charted and have to like rattle in honest warning of horlam has a similar distaste for persons who wantonly kill venomous snakes. Both of these men know others who feel as they do. They know where there are snake dens within flivvering distance of New York, but they keep this knowledge tions to snakes would destroy the serpents' homes.

Dr. Ditmars has found about twenty dens where snakes hibernate, and at this season of the year he is preparing his flivver for about a thousand miles of travel to these wild places. In no case, however, is he likely to go more than fifty miles from Forty-second Street and Broad-

"I'm getting the car shined up for my annual spring snake hunting expedition," Dr. Ditmars said recently to a friend who caught him lying on his back beneath his battered machine. "We need a lot of snakes, and it's up to me to go out and catch

Good Snake Weather

Zoo reptile house, the snake catcher brushed the dust from his clothing

SOME snake hunters must always hold the sack

Dr. Holmes endeavored to show ing a jeweled head was ornamented that prenatal influence, the bite of with a white pendant that upon ex- mountains a pair of field glasses is a rattlesnake inflicted on her mother amination proved to be the inch-long a great help in searching the surshortly before she was born, had af- fang of a rattler, a natural hypo- rounding country for likely places. fected Elsie Venner, creating an af- dermic needle used by the original Usually, as I say, a den is to be finity to which both she and rattle- owner to inject a poison into the found in a fissure in the rock on the

further for an explanation of the snakes from their winter sleep very fissures that run from thirty to fascination rattlesnakes have for early," resumed Dr. Ditmars when such men as Raymond L. Ditmars, he was ensconced in the swivel chair curator of reptiles and amphibians in his office in the reptile house, in and dead leaves blown in there by of the New York Zoological Park, or which building there are hundreds the wind make a fairly warm nest,

"Last year I motored about a thousand miles and walked and climbed When Dr. Ditmars hears of any I don't know how many more in makone willfully killing a rattlesnake ing a round of my snake dens," the that was merely minding its own curator said reflectively. "I have have to be very careful in describing these dens for fear of snake killers.

"I carelessly allowed to be printed a few years ago a picture of a rocky ledge which housed a snake den, and a carefully guarded secret, fearing versity, recognizing the formation, that persons with the ordinary reac-found his way to it with the cunning of a detective. He killed a lot of snakes, too."

Dr. Ditmars's eyes blazed at the

Snake Families Together

"I know of dens of at least five hundred adult snakes. These are wild, rugged places, and usually face south. The selection of southern exway in order to visit his reptile posure is a deep instinct with the friends. His favorite hunting ground snakes of this region. They know is in the Ramapo Mountains of New that ledges facing south will not be frozen in so deeply as ledges facing toward the other points of the compass. They are given some protecened earlier from their winter sleep.

"In some dens four or five species hole up. I have found blacksnakes, watersnakes, moccasins, copperheads and rattlers living more or less amicably in a single den. I know of others inhabited exclusively Crawling out from beneath the by rattlers, and others that are used car, parked in the rear of the Bronx exclusively by copperheads. I have proach of cold weather, they return, seen a red shale ledge where water- old and young survivors, and again well traveled highways, because I

"When I start out to hunt for dens cence. and adjusted with meticulous care I always get away from human

OCATING a snake den L from a Ramapo Hill

face of a cliff. Generally I have But it will be necessary to search "This sort of weather wakes the found that the snakes have selected forty feet back into the cliff, groups holing up in apartments or divisions in the fissure. Pine needles for the rotting vegetation generates

Meadow Lands Required

"Snakes retreat as the area of cultivated land encroaches on their former feeding grounds. Yet they require meadow land for feeding grounds. It is about this time of keep them a closely guarded secret year that they emerge from hibernarible death he grows furious. Gil- or farmers living near them would tion, and soon they will descend the destroy the dens with dynamite. I hillsides to the low grounds, where there is food and water-and where there are countless enemies.

PINNING a rattler this

"In the autumn, sensing the ap-

way has its excitements



SNAKES come large and small in the Ramapo

with discovered dens of different species. One of the best rattler ledges in the country is on Mount Eyelander, in the Berkshires. At from the snakes and discharged I can assure you. Five or six wick. Stockbridge, in the Berkshires, is the both barrels into the mass. The ed looking heads will be raised and rattler ledge described by Oliver Wendell Holmes in Elsie Venner."

Likes Their Coloring

fingered the rattler fang on his would have escaped if the farmers will almost invariably coil and give cravat. Then he said:

"That was a strange story, absurd was an eel gig attached to a long "The forked stick, and the prongs in places, and yet I am never so pole. It was a splendid spear to are not over two inches long, is happy as when I am on a ledge all "stick" snakes with. So they took jabbed at a snake's head, so as to acrawl with rattlers. I take as much turns, one gigging the serpents and pin it to the earth. Then another delight in their gorgeous coloring as then holding them out as targets stick is laid across his head close to a jewel collector might in the prize for the other to shoot. Very few his jaws. I usually rest my knee on stones that come into his possession. of the reptiles escaped. They the second stick to hold it in place, Do you wonder that it makes me counted twenty-five wriggling, head- and then, while the snake's head is furious when I find some one blow- less "varmints," whose tails contin- held powerless to move, grasp him ing out a snake crevasse with dyna- ued to buzz warnings that now were around the neck with one hand in

that shelter snakes.

is said, after he heard how a couple "It is darn seldom one of these bag back here half full of snakes

Rock, in the adjoining county of too. I am not speaking or the back-Delaware. These farmers, driving woodsmen who are attracted by along the soft dirt road behind a snakes and are usually known to pair of stolid country work horses, their neighbors as 'Rattlesnake Peter were surprised when the animals or 'Rattlesnake Bill.' The men I halted abruptly with ears pricked mention are nearly all naturalists forward and snorted and trembled in great fear. The horses refused to proceed, in spite of several sharp cuts with a whip, and finally one of the men dismounted to investigate. He walked ahead a few paces and glanced at the dry, rocky shore of a tiny stream. Then in great ex-

lance-shaped head protruded from the ball, and it was the rattling of half a dozen projecting tails that had alarmed the wise old farm

Slaughter of Snakes

a shotgun, and filled his pockets and leather leggings. Returning, he stood about ten feet the plains, we walk mighty careful, buzzing grew in intensity. Slowly pointing in your direction in a flash the ball unwound, and one by one of time. If they can manage it the the serpents detached themselves. snakes will try to slip away into the A few had been injured too much fissures in the rock. Stand between Dr. Ditmars paused a moment and to crawl away, but most of them them and their 'getaway,' and they had been content with the number warning. That is when our fun bekilled. In the bed of their wagon gins. false alarms.

There are many other snake Ike Whitbeck, who lives in the second finger are firm against the ledges or dens that are familiar Berkshires, is another devotee of the back of his jaws, and the index haunts of Dr. Ditmars and some few rattlers. Dr. Ditmars says that finger pressed against the rear of others who feel as he does about ser- Whitbeck is always to be found in his head. If your fingers are a pents. In Sullivan County, near the vicinity of their dens when the quarter of an inch too far back, Black Lake, there are several places young are born. Henry Mallory is though, the snake can whip its head thickly inhabited by reptiles, espe- another who is fascinated by the around and strike. That is what cially rattlers. Their human guar- mottled skins. He lives at Great gives this game its thrill, I guess. dian is Jerry Miller, an odd sort of Barrington, Mass. Among all these When you have him like that it is a man who knows every crack and fis- folks there is a sort of freemasonry. sure in the rocky parts of the county | They exchange letters and keep one another posted about the numbers of Jerry was in a rage for days, it rattlers in their sections.

citement he called his companion to

An entire community of venomous snakes was snarled into a living heap of menace. Here and there a

house about a mile distant, borrowed forked stick, and wear old clothes

An Ad Man's Fancy Arthur Gillam, of Flushing, is an

advertising man. His favorite hunt. ing ground is Orange County, New Jersey. He is planning some rattlesnake hunting trips with Dr. Dit. mars at this season. Last year Gillam on one trip captured fourteen specimens that Ditmars described as 'beautiful."

"Snakes are lively at this time of year," Dr. Ditmars said. "We have to handle them, of course, but we have a method, and it is pretty safe, although I believe I get more thrills out of snake hunting than anybody ever did who was hunting tigers. We take with us a heavy unbleached muslin bag or sack, a noose on the One of the men went to a farm- end of a four-foot stick, a long

with shells loaded with birdshot. and usually it is 1,200 feet above

such a fashion that the thumb and simple matter to drop him tail first

Quickness of Snakes

"Sometimes when we get such a the muslin is fairly dripping with venom expelled from the fangs of the angry captives.

"There is nothing that lives thatis quicker than a snake. Once I was reaching for a blacksnake and it leaped up the opening of my sleeve, wriggled its way upward and out at my collar and was gone before I could turn around. That was quickness, but a rattlesnake is quicker."

Dr. Ditmars says that where the human population is abundant snakes are very few. As proof of the rarity of snake bite in this part of the country he pointed out that the rattlesnake serum kept at the Bronx Zoological Park has been called for but three times in several years.

"We are sometimes requested by people who have bought large estates and who have seen a few snakes to tell them how to rid their premises of the reptiles. I always tell them to wait until fall or spring, and then, after finding their dens, notify us. We'll gladly gather them all up then. At those seasons of the year the snakes never stray far from the dens. In that way it is possible to rid a place of reptiles. Usually the calls of this sort we get refer to copperheads, of which there are many in this part of New York. I've got a

MRS. DITMARS, in the centre, and Gladys and Beatrice get three specimens for the zoo.

hole up for another season of quies- know that the snakes also avoid "When I start out on my spring tier of their own in the Ramapo them.

FORKING

a den near New York

City

a rattler in

traveled regions. They have a fron- an excellent place in which to catch of farmers had destroyed twenty-five | fellows gets bitten," said Dr. Dit- couple of such dens to clean up this rattlers that they found entwined mars. "They know how to handle year. We'll cage the captives, how-

his tie pin, which instead of contain- trails. When I get into the hills or hunt I avoid state roads and other Mountains, over in Jersey. That is "I have an atlas of my own marked in a great writhing ball on Hanging snakes and they are intelligent men, ever, and not kill them."

AUCTION BRIDGE

TT IS a good general working rule in bidding at auction that one should not be deterred from making any declaration, either on one's own cards or as an assist, when one's cards are good for it, just because assist, because the second hand has

The beginner's argument is that the partner has shown the suit he would like led against anything, and that with the lead against the notrumper, why not sit tight and play the hand? The answer is that while might not be able to make two or three by cards, and if the hearts are good for two or three, why not bid it and push the no-trumper up a bit?

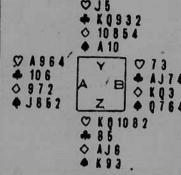
The same reasoning applies to the double, and the third hand should not hesitate to assist when he has a good assisting hand, just because the first bid is doubled. On the same principle, when the original bidder is doubled, he should not hesitate to rebid his hand if he has a rebid. If he passes, he leads his partner to believe that he is weaker than he really is.

By R. F. Foster

Author of Foster on Auction, Auction Made Easy, Foster's Complete Hoyle, etc.

is a common mistake for the third that if one bids a suit and then re- spades, nor did he feel like going on band to refuse to assist a major bids it, there are tricks in the hand with the hearts if Z had nothing but contract will stand. The edge of this outside strength may enable the partner to locate it and perhaps to use this knowledge to the discomfiture of the doublers.

partner loses his confidence and lets the opponent get a contract that



doubled, the result was to make an astonishing difference in the score. that game! At one of them Z passed the double

the bid and B had a no-trumper in When a player who has some good shorten dummy. Y led another jack of trumps and A let it hold. A Z over-trumps, leads trumps and left to the judgment of the partner cards in his hand refuses to show heart, which A won. The six of and the ace won. Z then led trumps the no-trumper may be perfectly the opponent get a contract that the no-trumper may be perfectly they have no business with. Here A to force the king with the ten.

This is a good example of not leading an honor to an honor without all the ace-quen without the ten. Y came back with the nine of four honors.

clubs, dummy putting on the jack. Probably thinking A still had a small points, the difference being entirely club, Z trumped with the trey and due to his rebidding his hand over was over-trumped with the five. A the double on his right. It is curiled a small heart and Y discarded a ous that had A taken a chance on losing club, dummy making a little no-trumps as an answer to the dou-

with the nine and B again over- | stopped only once if Z does not overtrumped, leading the fourth heart, take the jack. On this Y put the ace of trumps and led the ten, which dummy covered and Z won. Now Z has to give No. 48, given last week, in which Z dealt and bid a heart, A and Y dummy a diamond and two trump hearts were trumps, Y and Z to win passing. At two tables at which B tricks. This gives A and B two by- all the tricks, with the lead. cards against simple honors. Y congratulates his partner on saving small, which Y trumps with the

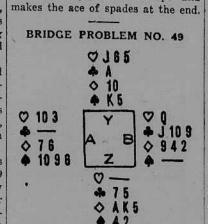
If Z rebids his hand, as he should, When two players understand the and A called one spade. Y did not A will be relieved from the duty of an opponent has bid something. It theory of modern bidding they know see any danger of losing the game at taking out the double, as he has no diamond with the heart four and five-card suit, and the two-heart discard or trump. contract will stand. That is what!

small diamond, covered by the queen, clubs was covered by the queen, and and A won the second round, getting the return of a small club enabled the encouraging club seven discard

A club from A and the ace killed the queen. B made his king of diafour. Many beginners make the ting in with the jack, pulling A's same mistake in leading a jack to trump and making the king of clubs, four by cards and the game, with Instead of a tie score, two tricks

Z starts with a diamond, large or and Z wins. Now Y trumps another

leads the ace of clubs, forcing B to If B discards the queen of diamonds, Z sheds the ace of spades. to know which it is?-F. L. C. Then the play went this way: A When Y leads the deuce of spades, B led a small spade. Dummy put on must trump and Z over-trumps, lead-double is conventional if the partner The play went this way. Y led a the ace, returned the ten and ruffed ing a trump through the king ten to has not made a bid, but when the con-



There are no trumps and Z leads. ble he would have been set back Y and Z want six tricks. How do

AUCTION BRIDGE

Question-The original bid is three spades, doubled by the fourth hand, no smallest heart. Y leads the club ten bids having intervened. Is the partner of the doubler to take this as a conventional double or as a business take four to overcall it. How is one

Answer-The usual rule is that any heart, and A let the trick go to the third round. Then he led the the ace-jack. If B trumps the club, tract doubled is as high as this it is the doubler should have to be sound.

> where the lower score is not deducted from the higher, but players keep all they make, does each side score 20 when the aces are split at no-trump ?---

Answer-No, because the scoring is precisely the same as in the ordinary rubber, except in balancing the gains and losses at the end. Easy aces count nothing for either side.

Qestions and Answers Regarding Auction Bridge, Poker. Pinochle, Etc.

FOR THE CARD PLAYERS

double? If it is conventional it will the tricks by which the contract fails? players will undertake it.

Answer-The penalty for failure is 50 for the first trick at contract, 100 still permissible to meld eight aces for the second and 200 for any further. for 1,000 points and claim the game at These amounts are doubled if the de- once ?-J. F. S. clarer is doubled, just as at auction.

Question-The dealer bids a diawhether to risk a bid of four or play mond; second hand holding five spades form of pinochle. Eight aces are worth to set the contract. It is not easy to to the ace, king, ten; five hearts to the twice a hundred aces, or 200, if main make three spades against a no- ten, nine and three clubs to the ace, all at once. trumper in the three other suits, which king. What is the correct call, to double the diamond bid or make a bid ?- A calls out, but is found not to have

> double. The correct bid is one spade, only 640 points. How much does B with the opportunity to call the hearts later if the spade bid is overcalled -L. J. M. both suits can be shown and the partner selects the one in which he is

> > POKER

Question—In playing contract auc- but are at a loss to know how to rank a game, regardless of any calling out The seven of clubs was trumped about four tricks, the hearts being they get them? Solution next week, tion does doubling affect the value of the hands when such things as three on reaching 1,000.

pairs or two triplets are shown. Which is the better hand ?-E. C. K. Answer-This game is not sufficiently popular to justify going into elaborate calculations as to the rank of the freak

hands it produces unless some of your

Question-Playing two-hand, is it

Question-Playing for a cent a point, quite reached 1,000. According to the Answer-It si a waste of time to rules, B wins the game; but B has win if A has 980, but loses the game?

Answer-Pinochle is played for so much a game. If you change the rules in one respect, and make it for so much a point, you must also change the rule about settling, when the loser of the game has more points than the Question-We play with six cards. winner. The better way, of you play